

RQG – [Episode] – [Title]

Content Warnings **leave as shown unless dictated otherwise**

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[Show Theme - Intro]

ALEX

Hello and welcome to episode 41 of the Rusty Quill Gaming podcast. I'm your host and GM Alex Newall and with me for yet another exciting adventure, I have

BEN

Ben Meredith

BRYN

Bryn Monroe

LYDIA

Lydia Nicholas

HELEN

And Helen Gould

ALEX

And who are you playing?

BEN

Zolf Smith

BRYN

Hamid Saleh Haroun al-Tahan

LYDIA

Sasha Rackett

BEN

And we still have no Bertie MacGuggingham after he departed on a train to nowhere, let's say.

LYDIA

Ignoring Hamid's cries.

BEN

He's probably off having some sort of exciting sexy adventure, that's what I'm guessing.

LYDIA

I just assume that he is a hotel getting pampered and having his nails done.

BRYN

Having an exciting sexy adventure.

LYDIA

In a jacuzzi.

BEN

He's just staring at his soothing finger again, passing an enormous amount of time staring at his hand.

BRYN

Probably warm and safe.

BEN

(laughs)

ALEX

So, I'm afraid that leaves the rest of us. Well, after finding out a bit of world news you did eventually, via some dodgy addresses, eventually make your way to finding [?? Anne-Marie Rose's 01:12](#) mother who seemed... I liked her.

BRYN

Madam Rose. I liked her too. She's gets older woman. You know Miss Marple. Excellent.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah.. She was on it.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

And she gave you a lot of a missing pieces of the puzzle, thanks to a dead hand policy box.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Which her daughter had left and..

BRYN

She was one of those helpful NMCs that just tells you what to do so you don't have to think too hard about how to solve the plot yourself.

BEN

(laughs)

ALEX

And I believe that whilst of you still didn't really have much of an idea of the grand scheme, you certainly seemed to have decided that maybe Notre Dame, maybe the catacombs were worth checking out, either way.

LYDIA

Basically, we got the impression that this all goes much deeper and much darker than we realised.

ALEX

Both figuratively and literally

BRYN

Of the names on the list the only one you surround is Francois Henri and we know he can essentially change our memories.

ALEX

Or whatever's controlling him.

BRYN

Yeah, and everyone else has had mysterious and strange good things happen to them.

ALEX

Excelling things.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BRYN

And moved far away.

ALEX

Nothing sinister or bad ever happened with unexpected good news. So, everything's probably fine, probably.

LYDIA

It seems like the sort of quest that can't go wrong. If you do get caught then just excellent things happen.

BRYN

Something great happens to you.

BEN

That's a good way to look at it actually.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

I've got you now and... ooh, what's behind this curtain? It's a new car.

(everybody laughs)

LYDIA

No, it's interesting you say that. So, Smash Cut to Prague. **BRYN**

Wait, wait, wait. Am I a dragon?

LYDIA

Of course.

BRYN

Because then it's not a happy ending.

ALEX

You're two dragons.

BYRN

Yes.

(everyone laughs)

ALEX

So, what we'll do is we'll say... we will accelerate time a bit because presumably having finished talking to Madam Rose you headed home.

BRYN

Get the bus go back to Paris.

ALEX

Yes, it's a long journey. So, I must just skip ahead, say you took your tiny little vehicles back, you...

BEN

Had another massive meal.

ALEX

Had an enormous meal.

LYDIA

And rested so now I am back up to the hit points.

BRYN

Oh yeah. Did I obtain any damage?

ALEX

Rested.

BRYN

I don't think I obtained any damage.

LYDIA

Yeah, because... I took a lot of damage and I...

ALEX

Did you? I didn't notice.

LYDIA

And Zolf's healing only got me so far back up. So, I'm now back to okay.

ALEX

Yep, and we will pick up the next morning. You have woken up, bright eyed and bushy tailed and we will skip past the enormous breakfast otherwise we will have ten minutes of RPing deliciousness again.

BEN

So, **?? Notes arm 03:29** to go in or find a different entrance?

LYDIA

Yeah, we should, obviously go in as tourists to case the joint and then maybe look around for ways to get underneath.

BEN

Yeah, I mean, I suppose it wouldn't be too hard to just go round Notre Dame during the day and look around.

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

And if we want to go into the catacombs I don't know if it would be easier to get in at night when there's less people to see us.

BRYN

I wonder if there's ?? 03:53.

BEN

Just sneaking in.

BRYN

It might be easier to bluff our way into the archaeological dig than Notre Dame though.

ALEX

But Notre Dame will have just have tourists, wouldn't it?

BEN

Let's give it a go.

LYDIA

Sightseeing.

ALEX

So, second breakfast and then Notre Dame?

BEN

Yes. We'll have to make it a quick one I think though.

BRYN

Yeah, of course. Second breakfast is always pretty quick especially after the first breakfast was that big.

ALEX

For the sake of speed we will cut ahead past second breakfast to...

BRYN

We're not cutting past meals.

BEN

But its' the most second most important meal of the day.

(everyone laughs)

ALEX

We'll skip ahead until...you're tickled, Bryn. . We will skip to the approach to Nore Dame. So, Sasha, thanks to her airtime amongst the gargoyles, has a really good idea of the sort of layout of Paris on the macroscale cause I mean, she's seen all of it from the top down and she had people guiding her. So, you are able to get everyone there very easily. On the approach to the cathedral the first think that you notice is...

BEN

A pigeon.

BRYN

The bells.

ALEX

The bells are ringing actually. Funny you should say that. I realise you're just trying to make my edit hard but I'm going to make it worse so don't worry. There are bells ringing continuously. I don't know if you've been there in reality, there's an open space out front and so on. There are a lot of tourists, there are some sort of walking tours going on. There is an enormous amount of completely golden armoured paladins wondering around. It's weird, they give this sort of American football hero vibe and all them seem attractive, men, women, it doesn't matter. They all seem to have a very radiant glow about them, really really physically attractive. The glass circle of Notre Dame at the face is actually, in this reality, large symbol of a sun. The cathedral itself...

BRYN

Which means it's a hollow...

ALEX

A hollow and rather it being austere, it's completely coloured. So, all of the facades, all of the cornicing, everything, very very brightly coloured, bordering on garishly . Every single statue, their clothing is coloured, their face is coloured, their hair is coloured, it's like looking at a very busy painting. But, on

the ground levels like we're saying, paladins everywhere, a lot of priests going round. There's a small number of supplicants who will come and then a paladin will reach out or a cleric reach out and clearly they're doing some minor healing as well. But, it doesn't really seem very orderly. It's seems very ad hoc, do whatever, there's no queues or anything like that. The doors are wide open and there is a full male and female choir on either side of the doors singing. It's very flashy in a way that all of the Poseidon stuff was very austere and secretive and insular, this is the exact opposite of that in every way, every sense.

BEN

Mmm, it might be a little bit more difficult with the paladins trotting about. On the flip side you can trust a paladin so we could always just ask if we can go in.

ALEX

Speaking of which, one comes up.. Ladies, gentlemen, is there anything that I can be doing for you this fair morning, courtesy of the great god Apollo who brought this morning? Ha ha ha ha ha.

BEN

Good morning. We were hoping for a tour of the cathedral.

ALEX

Oh, of course.. There are multiple tours. Honestly, if you can just find someone who's walking by. Of course, I could show you round myself if you'd prefer.

BEN

Do the tours include the crypt underneath? ??07:08

ALEX

No, I'm afraid not. I'm afraid not, my little man. The catacombs etc are completely off limits.

BEN

I didn't know that. Thank you for that.

ALEX

Oh, you're very welcome.

BEN

That's very interesting.

ALEX

Anything you need of a heal or anything like that?

BRYN

I'll just tap my trainers. No, they've got that covered, thank you.

ALEX

Oh, I didn't see you there. Hello. Goodness me, it's good to see your fellow cleric? I want to say cleric.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

What are you doing so far from the coast? Honestly, you're out of your jurisdiction.. Ha ha ha ha.

BRYN

We're by a river.

That's a...you're a sharp one. I like you.

BRYN

Actually, we're on an island.

ALEX

Technically, yes.

BRYN

Yes.

LYDIA

Isn't like eventually everything's an island?

ALEX

She's a profound one, isn't she?

BRYN

No, but this is actually an island.

LYDIA

Oh, right. Got to get our escape routes covered.

ALEX

Yes. So...

BEN

I'd just like to look around and see a bit about Notre Dame.

ALEX

Well, if you like I can show you round or...?

BEN

That would be lovely, thank you.

ALEX

Excellent. He begins his tour and it becomes rapidly apparent as he begins walking round, he starts by doing of lap of the actual island and talking about things. He has a memorised road passage, the broad history it. As time passes it becomes readily apparent that he's being really competitive with other paladins who are also showing people around. So, anytime there's a tour and

his tour comes up, they'll be like and here you can see this frieze... (shouts)

And here you can see this frieze was dedicated – and he's very brash...

BRYN

I'm going to ask... every door I see I'm going to ask, oh, is that the one to the crypt? I don't want to go through a door I'm not allowed to go through.

ALEX

So, once you've done the tour of the outer island he, again, he takes you inside and for once finally passing through the doors he lowers his voice and goes, now we do have to be a bit quiet in here so watch your volume etc.

BRYN

Quite.

ALEX

Over here you've got... a lot of frowning faces and so on and he proceeds to just go through the numbers. It is genuinely very interesting. The only reason I'm skipping past it is it takes a good three hours. It's very false and he seems utterly tireless just ploughing on and on and on. Every time you ask a question, his answer is always I'll have to ask one of the clerics about if in a bit. He has his memorised road but that's all he's got and whenever you ask about the doors it's always a no, not quite my little man but I'll let you know if it comes up.

LYDIA

About hour one.

(everyone laughs)

LYDIA

Sasha might sneak off.

BEN

Go for it. Give me a self-check.

LYDIA

Ooh, 16.

ALEX

The paladin doesn't notice you leaving.

LYDIA

Yep.

ALEX

He is reciting something about one of the minor chapels coming off the side.

BEN

Near us two.

BRYN

Yeah, we just roll as well. Giving us notice. Sasha leaving.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

You find yourself in a side chapel. There is a couple of people kneeling praying to lit candles and so on. Hamid and Zolf have moved off, not aware that you've ducked out, still listening to the various...And this portrait is of a large person.

(everyone laughs)

LYDIA

Very good, very good.

BRYN

That is a very big person.

ALEX

So, what do you do, Sasha?

BEN

All people are pretty big from my perspective.

ALEX

(laughs)

LYDIA

Firstly just wander around on her own.

ALEX

Sure.

LYDIA

And quite enjoy the fact that there's these wonderful sharp shadows. Because even if they've lit it very brightly, there's all those wonderful pillars and there will be shadows and sort of sneaking behind people and go woo hoo.

(everybody laughs)

ALEX

I'd say I'm not even going to get you to do your stealth role, the place is so garish and the paladins are so over the top. The clerics, for what its worth, are a lot less over the top, they're a bit more austere but nonetheless, there's so much going on, you're not even needing to make roles. Like you could start in the shadows but it becomes readily apparent very quickly that stealth is not required in this place.

LYDIA

She will then basically try and follow the staff and try and work out where the actual operations are. So the kind of people that are selling things at the gift shop or the kind people that are cleaning round and just sort of try and work out where are the places with the tourists don't go.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

That might be a way into...

ALEX

So, I'll go into a broader description of the actual building itself and give you a bit more of a layout. So, you have that large sun symbol at the entrance, a lot of stained glass windows, things like that around the edges. The centre is still you know taken up by a number of pews however at the end furthest from the main entrances doors there is a huge, potentially actually generally solid gold statue of Apollo and by huge I mean about 30 feet tall. He's on a chariot, it's a very dynamic one where the chariot is sort of towing the sun, which is low down. There's an enormous amount of gold in it to the point where if it is real, its invaluable expenses and, also, almost certainly magic was involved in construction or something because that's tonnes, tonnes and tonnes.

BRYN

I've casted tech magic a few times so I can what's magical around it when going on the tour.

ALEX

It's more... there's magic kicking around then when you were in the Carven of Posedion actually and there's more of it being used, the more mundane things as well like floating candelabras and things like that and you see that the ceiling is a massive picture... the whole pantheon are there but it is them

witnessing approvingly a sunrise. However, as you are sort of going round, you detect magic on it, it is magical and you start to notice that it's actually depicting the passage of the sun in real time and occasionally the gods will move and things like that.

BRYN

Oh cool.

LYDIA

Zolf still thinks its tacky.

(every one laughs)

ALEX

Sasha, it becomes very clear that this central space, is very much intended for tourists. There are a large number of doors leading off to the sides and to the higher levels and so on. It becomes clear that all of the balconies overlooking it, there are no tourists, that is just clerics and paladins.

LYDIA

Okay. I might ask someone .. Hello, so like heard that you've got these wonderful spooky catacombs and you know I'm always one for a haunt in me and I wondered if there were ever any tours around them?

ALEX

The cleric that you have popped up at goes I'll just fetch someone for you.

LYDIA

Alright, cheers.

ALEX

Steps across and grabs a paladin, female paladin. She comes along. Hello, sorry, I heard you had a question. What was your question?

LYDIA

I'm just interested the catacombs.

ALEX

Oh, you can't go to the catacombs, those are off limits to the public.

LYDIA

Are they? But do ghosts and skeletons and stuff escape and come up?

ALEX

Oh, you don't need to worry. We're all capable of dealing with such things.

LYDIA

So, is that why there's so many people here because you do get skeletons up?

ALEX

Oh, once upon a time, back... the route begins, they start talking, it is effectively saying that once upon a time, yeah, ,the catacombs were rancid with creatures, however, one of the first things that the new Church of Apollo did once they set up Notre Dame was, send people down and cleanse as much as they could find and yet the explanation it just goes on and on. And then she starts trying to lead you and you see that she's actually leading you on the route that you just took about 20 minutes ago and starts just heading into the route.

LYDIA

I think it's... I'm alright, actually, I'm just going.. please, no, just let go of my hand, I can... I'm fine, I don't need to...

ALEX

Of course you're fine, all of these clerics, we are capable and the most prolific healers in the entire city.

LYDIA

Right, I don't... no, please, I'm just... I've got some friends waiting for me, please... no, no, it's very pretty, all the bright colours, very nice.

ALEX

I'm afraid it's falling on deaf ears. Unless you literally pull yourself away and try to sneak away and try to sneak away you're doing this tour.

LYDIA

:Look, I can see my friends right over there.

ALEX

It's still not happening.

LYDIA

No, please, stop.

ALEX

I'm cutting ahead.

LYDIA

Stop telling me all this information. I don't need it, I don't want it, no.

(every one laughs)

ALEX

I'm cutting ahead.

LYDIA

Education.

(every one laughs)

ALEX

Sasha, you are just coming out of the front having experienced, not only the first hour twice, but the second hour which she then proceeded to do and she was... she had a grip like iron and was pulling you the whole way.

LYDIA

Nooooo.

BEN

The loudest that Sasha has been.

ALEX

Zolf and Hamid, you are outside and you see Sasha finally extricate herself from another door.

BRYN

I've bought some street food.

ALEX

Sure, yeah, you'll be there and you finally reconvene outside the front and you can hear more paladins loudly declaiming exactly the same words as they lead everyone on a subtly clockwise route.

BEN

Would you like a snail? They're really good?

LYDIA

Do you know that the statue in the left pedestal...

BRYN

LYDIA

It was erected in 1530 but it got defaced in 1545. Someone wanted to pay for their own statue to be in the place. So, the face isn't original. And did you know that the sun, it was in real time? It follow... it follows the path...

ALEX

Sasha, are you admitting... you see traumatised.

BEN

It will be okay, Sasha.

LYDIA

The hair in Apollo's statue is real.

BRYN

I actually have a question which I just thought of.

BEN

What? Fire away.

BRYN

And you might know this because you're religious too. Why is it called Notre Dame? Because Notre Dame means Our Lady.

BEN

I **?? know, make the 16:19** knowledge religion.

BRYN

Go for it.

BEN

16.

BRYN

Do you have history?

BEN

Yes.

BRYN

Author of 16.

ALEX

So for your knowledge history, you know that originally there was a building upon the site that we dedicated to one of the Meritocrats and it was

eventually repurposed for the Church of Apollo with their permission but it is actually dedicated to... the land was originally named for one of the Meritocrats.

LYDIA

That lady who ended up in a lovely Meritocrat marriage took a tramp.

ALEX

Although there is an interesting historical tip bit which is no one's quite sure which one it was dedicated to. It was dedicated but due to ambiguity in the actual deeds and papers and so on, it's dedicated to Our Lady but they don't actually know which Meritocrat it is. It's like a little picadillo.

BEN

Most likely the Parisian one but not necessarily.

BRYN

Basically, what he said.

ALEX

(laughs)

BRYN

Thank you, Zolf, that's really interesting.

BEN

Always happy to help. In fact, actually, if you look forward here...

(every one helps)

BEN

I'm sorry, I'm sorry Sasha.

ALEX

Safe spaces, no loud.

SASHA

?? 17:31

BEN

What do you want to do this afternoon? I mean, if we go to the archaeological digger, we should wait until after dark.

BRYN

We could have a mooch about.

LYDIA

I don't think we should look at it. I think that maybe if we could just head underground I think that would be great. I think we should just head underground. There's...

BEN

The alternative is we just go through the sewer.

LYDIA

Yeah. Underground's great.

BRYN

I don't like sewers. It was quite pleasant last time we went to a sewer.

ALEX

They're full of poo.

BEN

Yes, was it? Was it?

BRYN

I had to dive in after you.

BEN

Fair enough.

LYDIA

Although after... you didn't end up swimming in it.

BRYN

I didn't but there was still residue.

ALEX

So, what is your plan?

BEN

I think it's go to the dig site, right?

LYDIA

Underground, yes.

BRYN

I mean, we have a nap.

ALEX

Have a nap?

BRYN

I mean, if go exploring at night, we should have a nap before we do that.

BEN

Hamid, this hotel life has really had an effect on you. We've got a job to do.

LYDIA

I want to case the joint in the light and then we can head...

BRYN

Have a nap.

LYDIA

Underground. You can have a nap if you want, I'll be fine?? Sneaking around here 18:37.

BRYN

If I'm up all night I want to have a nap first I want to have a nap first.

BEN

In that case, why don't you go have a nap, myself...

BRYN

Well, I'll come with you. I'm just saying we should build a nap into the schedule.

ALEX

So, what's you plan?

BEN

Well, first of all, we're going to have a nap around about 3.30.

ALEX

Okay.

LYDIA

Sasha, is going to head off.

ALEX

That's what I need to know.

BEN

Let's go the dig

BRYN

First or second lunch?

ALEX

Good question.

SASHA

I'm heading off in the direct of the archaeological dig muttering facts.

ALEX

We will cut of this conversation as a paladin rocks up going oh you're just in time for...

BEN

No, we're fine.

SASHA

Noooo.

ALEX

We're cutting ahead.

BEN

I'll give them a tour of the river.

ALEX

Cutting ahead. Can you give me a knowledge ??19:14.

BRYN

Is he worth drowning.

(everyone laughs)

SASHA

20.

ALEX

20. Okay.

SASHA

Not a natural one.

ALEX

Sure. You make your way quite easy...

BRYN

I'm natural.

ALEX

Hamid, you start to get a little bit lost because you're taking down the non-touristy aspects of Paris, side streets and so on. Sasha, you actually take a really efficient beeline route, do all the backstreets and you start pulling away from the main part of the city and actually back towards the sort of dingier side. Not the really like not **??Eiffels folly 19:45** or anything like that but you're heading more towards the sort of district that they **?? 19:48**. And eventually you start coming down and head down a rather steep slope and it seems to be maybe some kind of drainage of something similar, almost like it's a storm drain, things like that. We're heading down, eventually you come beneath the bridge. It's a large bridge, it's clearly very old construction and there appears to be a large amount of construction at the base of the bridge. They are making use of earth elementals, multiple ones you see slowly moving round heading into beneath this tunnel which is well lit. There are a number of sort of keepers for the elementals and a number of **?? 20:28** to the archaeologists, things like that sorting through items outside at the base of the

bridge. It's still good weather and it's clear that this is the dig that you were heading towards.

SASHA

Alright, that looks like a good way in.

BRYN

I told you it would be quite busy. I mean, it would be better to come back when...

ALEX

There's easily about 40 people here.

BEN

Yeah, we just wanted to see it.

SASHA

And we could ask them what's going on.

BEN

Yeah, interested tourists.

SASHA

You should probably do that because they might start to listing facts again.

BRYN

Maybe you can claim you're from a university.

SASHA

Yeah, yeah. Say we've come on a job from the British Museum even and so we're...

BRYN

I can ask them what's going on.

ALEX

Someone's who's clearly a foreman has already started coming over having seen you. He's wearing basically a hard hat. It's only just steel and plain but he's quite a small man, a little bit portly and he has a sort of a nervous air to him carrying a clipboard. Oh, who are you? What are you here for, sorry?

BRYN

Well, we don't have any official business. We're actually...

ALEX

No, no rubbernecking here, sorry. We've got quite a lot of work to do, enough without having to deal with people like yourselves.

BRYN

No, I do understand. Like I said, we don't have any official business necessarily. I mean, we're actually...

ALEX

Terry, put that down. You know that that has to go to collection B.

BRYN

On a job from the British Museum.

ALEX

He takes a moment. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. You guys aren't here till Thursday. We were very clear about that, you're not here till the Thursday.

BRYN

Exactly. But, we just wanted to get a step ahead of ourselves and just make sure there's nothing we need to... any other things we have to do first, just before ?? 21:58.

ALEX

He's becoming very very irate. The second you mentioned the British Museum rather than being more conducive he's gone the exact opposite way. Now, you listen here, we were very clear with you about what your conditions are. You're lucky that you're allowed in this dig at all. Frankly, you guys have be so appropriationist with everything that we've dug before that you're lucky that we're letting you here at all. So, you're going to listen to me. You're going to

get back... and you've clearly touched a really raw nerve by mentioning the British Museum.

BRYN

I'll be very apologetic and just...

ALEX

Give the diplomacy role.

BEN

25?

ALEX

Yeah. You manage to sort of bring the situation back down using skill. It's clear that you fluked upon a really sore topic but, yeah, you manage to talk him back down. It's like, sorry, I didn't...

BRYN

I totally understand. I admit we haven't always done as well as we could in the past. So, we'll leave you to it. We didn't mean to intrude.

ALEX

No, it's fair enough.

LYDIA

We just wanted to make sure we were doing it right this time.

BRYN

Yeah, we didn't want to...

LYDIA

So, get advance notice.

BRYN

Contravene any of your regulations.

LYDIA

Exactly.

BRYN

So, we'll leave it all til Thursday, if that's best for you.

ALEX

Come on, come on. I'll show you the basic entrance but I'm not taking you any deeper than that today.

BRYN

No, of course, of course.

ALEX

And he proceeds to take you forth to the main entrance. It's clear that what appears to be sort of earth and tunnel, when you're getting closer, isn't actually that. In the foundations of the bridge there's actually a gated doorway so it looks like very very heavy wrought iron. But the reason that there's so much crusting on the outside as you see yet another earth elemental duck in, a bit just sort of scrapes off, scrapes on the top and so on. So, it's given it this kind of crusty earthy look. But it's actually completely worked stone.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

So, yeah, heading down, it's very very busy, there's clearly like a really big effort been made. There's obviously something, a big project taking place. Heading down, it heads down the tunnel and after maybe five minutes of walking, lots of stopping, both have a mental bus pass, keep walking stop. A cart of wrapped items is brought up and so on. Leads you down...

LYDIA

Can we see anything ?? rubbishy? 23:54?

ALEX

Honestly, they're... most of them are encased in mud and filth.

LYDIA

Can't appraise anything?

ALEX

Not really. You'd have to dust them off. You'd have to do some basic archaeology to get them into a state where you can appraise them.

LYDIA

That's for other people.

ALEX

(laughs) Lesser appraisers. Eventually you get brought down into what's about to be quite a large cavern and it has a very gothic air, and I mean that in the artistic gothic sense not just a sort of generally vibe.

LYDIA

Everyone's wearing black.

ALEX

Everyone's moaning. Really base music playing.

LYDIA

Yeah, sort of drone music.

BEN

Lots of eyeliner or is that just Hamid?

(everyone laughs)

ALEX

Takes the sleeves, puts them on full goth gear. So, there's a...

BRYN

No, I've put them so I'm wearing a hard hat.

ALEX

Ah, clever. So, it's not a real hard hat. So, if anything falls you're taking loads of damage.

BEN

But, the hard hat, it does nothing.

(everyone laughs)

ALEX

So, it is a low vaulted ceiling. It's not huge, it's not elaborate, it's very clear that this is not a space for the public to be in. There a large number of small alcoves around the side with little identifying plaques beneath and the foreman's just going... So, obviously, we're now... generally speaking, the deeper in you go the older these are.

BRYN

Of course, of course.

ALEX

What you're in here is the skull containment number... flipping through 6. Obviously, we've removed all of these and for the sake of the decency they've been buried off site, nothing of particular interest was found. Obviously, you've got east, you've got west. You already know about northern wing, that's the one that you're going to be dealing with.

BRYN

Yes, yes.

ALEX

East and west, of course, is leading off into the separate areas. Please do not take the west until it heads towards... eventually apparently it heads towards the Ordinatists. Please do not go near them, they have a private lease on all of all of the **subterranean land 25:36 ??**.

BRYN

Of course, of course. I had the east... you haven't fully explored the eastern one yet even?

ALEX

We're still doing a lot of work on the eastern side. Honestly, it's not really your concern. I appreciate...

BRYN

Of course, of course. Sorry. Just interested... I'll try to restrain myself.

ALEX

And then he carries on and points down to the northern and it's very clear that whatever the English team that he thinks you are, are bringing to the table is experts on the architectural side and he's talking about more of the foundations of the city. Obviously, it's a warren that even though he says the northern tunnel, eastern tunnel, western tunnel, within about 50 yards that meaning ceases completely so winding and complicated.

BRYN

Is there any indication which direction Notre Dame would be in?

ALEX

No, not really,

BRYN

Yes

ALEX

In a literal sense the catacombs beneath Paris are a maze. So, eastern, northern and western is literally just talking about...

BRYN

From that ?? 26:29.

ALEX

These three points are more or less vaguely western, vaguely eastern, vaguely northern. But, even then, as he goes on he explains and he just starts doing a really boring health and safety thing. Do not stray from the following things. We've marked everything that you don't go at. Everything that is marked with a red you have to avoid. Structurally unsafe. Anything marked with a green may have some kind of miasma things. Like that, stay clear of that. They have a notation system set up for the areas that they exploring in this dig.

BRYN

Is there any maps around? I'll ask him if they've mapped it out.

ALEX

Oh for goodness sake. I've given you all of the... wait here. Goes off. You hear a conversation that broadly comes down to the British are here. The other oh for god sake. Blah blah blah. He comes back with a fairly thick folder.. You're lucky that we knew you'd need a second copy. He passes it to you. Everything that you need is in there, all the details of the dig, just be on time this time, okay?

BRYN

I thank you profusely and apologise even more profusely.

ALEX

Right, well. As fun as this was I actually have to get back to my work.

BRYN

Of course, of course.

ALEX

So, you can show yourselves out. Thank you.

BRYN

Yes.

ALEX

And he just strides off and starts berating one of the elemental handlers for sending him down the wrong tunnel.

LYDIA

I might sneak off.

BRYN

Interesting. Well, I think that if there's a way for all of us to get lost this might be a good opportunity.

ALEX

You tell me.

BRYN

Like how many people are around as we sort of very slowly start heading back towards the entrance?

ALEX

A lot.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Like there's maybe six of elementals which are sifting through the dirt. Really interestingly for probably not Hamid because he's a bit more experienced on these. It's really peculiar in that they seem to have their hands on the ground and one side is sucking up dirt into the actual body and it begins to make up the body and then sucking it back down the other arm and occasionally something will filter out the back. It appears that they are incredibly efficiently just sifting through their bodies is how they're sifting it and then walking back and another earth elemental literally steps out of what looks like a solid wall in front of you, passed through the wall again on the other side. They're moving through it like air.

LYDIA

That would be so useful for sneaking around in a wall. I can only next to walls.

ALEX

But there at least 30 employees. It's very busy. I mean, you get the very clear impression that if you were to head down just a couple of tunnels it would get very quickly.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

What I would say is no one seems to be paying attention to you. No one's batting an eyelid. The hard hats seem to be actually doing a good lot of the workers. Anyone who turns an eye, sees the hard hat, mutters something about inspections and then carries on. So, no one's really paying any attention.

LYDIA

Right. See this is a technique I've used before. You just put on a glowing top and everyone thinks that you're in charge. Very.

BEN

Do we want to do this now or later?

BRYN

This might be a missed opportunity but...

LYDIA

Oh no, we're lost. In wonder which way is the way out.

BYRN

If we just...

ALEX

You're saying this on a long straight very clear and obvious which is the way out?

LYDIA

I wonder... we've got turned around. I think..

BRYN

We just stride off confidentially and if I look like I'm sort of ushering you that way.

LYDIA

Yeah.

BEN

Okay, you lead on. We might be able to get away with it.

LYDIA

I mean, great, and he already thinks the British are incompetent so it's kind of believable if we get stopped.

BRYN

I think so.

ALEX

So which direction do you take?

LYDIA

Good old national identity.

ALEX

We'll say that whilst there are small side ones, again they are small. Like a lot of them it's very clear it's a nook and nothing more. Broadly speaking, you are going to have to pick north, east or west from that central point because that's where anything that actually has any...

BEN

East is the one...?

ALEX

East is the one that the foreman suggesting headed towards the Ordineatists bit.

LYDIA

Let's head down that one that points towards the Ordineatists.

BRYN

Quickly and confidentially like we're doing the right thing.

LYDIA

How do I do that?

BEN

Just follow him.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

So, you head down the east tunnel. Obviously, you're now having to walk quite confidentially as if you know what you're doing.

BRYN

So, it's a... I'm thinking of this as a bluff rather than a stealth role.

ALEX

I agree.

BRYN

Because it's a social attempt to...

ALEX

I will allow you to cover for everyone because the hard hat people assume that you're the one in charge.

LYDIA

Good because 30:38 ??

ALEX

(laughs)

BEN

I rolled a 16 and 25.

ALEX

16. 25. Yeah, no one assumed. What I'm going to get you to do though is make some very quick decisions because part of this bluff is you know where you're going. So, I'm going to give you some decisions and unless someone tells me otherwise I'm going to let Hamid make the decisions since he's "leading you".

LYDIA

Sasha would have a very good idea of being able to navigate underground and a sense of direction.

ALEX

So, technically knowing the sort of direction of things when you're in conditions like underground or in a blizzard would normally cover survival.. But I totally agree, that contextually Sasha would have an easier time dealing with things underground.

LYDIA

She doesn't know the way around Paris underground but she'd be able to say, as you turn through different things like I don't know whether the tunnel continues that way but that is the right way.

ALEX

Do you. have... what knowledges do you have?

LYDIA

I only have local.

ALEX

Then what I'll do is, give me a flat wisdom check. So, just roll it and then add your wisdom.

LYDIA

I am quite wide. So, that's 11.

ALEX

11. So, the problem that you have is that whilst you are able normally to do this, everything's really interesting.

LYDIA

Mmm.

ALEX

Cause as you're walking through you do walk through parts and there appears to be a full set of armour but intended for a skeleton and things like that, where's it...

LYDIA

We could wear.

ALEX

Really off the wall stuff that you've never seen before . Like you get distracted too easily. Someone's digging up a contraption, it looks like it's primitive dig.

LYDIA

I've got to appraise that. Yeah.

ALEX

And the problem is you just get so distracted that you're like okay, cool, I know where... oh, no.

BEN

Shiny.

ALEX

Yeah. So, you just end up losing it. But Hamid, I need you to make some quick decisions for me, are you ready?

BRYN

Yep.

ALEX

Left or right?

BRYN

Left.

ALEX

Left or right?

BRYN

Right.

ALEX

Forwards or right?

BRYN

Forwards.

ALEX

Forwards or right?

BRYN

Forwards.

ALEX

Left or forwards?

BRYN

Left. Turn to page 23.

(everyone laughs)

ALEX

Okay. Yeah. Eventually you manage to place yourself...

LYDIA

Interesting sound in that okay. Okay.

BRYN

Okay.

BEN

Okay.

ALEX

You manage eventually...

LYDIA

He's going to have fun, are we?

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

You leave the work behind. I presume that to cover your bluff you have been looking through the portfolio as you're walking.

BRYN

Oh, yeah.

ALEX

Obviously. Busy, busy, busy, busy.

BRYN

Oh, yeah.

ALEX

Business, work business, business. So...

BRYN

Documents, got to keep the documents documented.

ALEX

Part of the notation system that's very clear on the health and safety side is red means structurally unsound?

BRYN

Yeah, the man said that.

ALEX

Yeah, green is... they called the miasmas. Yellow is for unexplored and unknown. So, it's a case of we're just drawing a line here.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

Because it gets so convoluted that there's no way of really knowing where it ends up.

LYDIA

Sasha is going to leave a slash with her oldest dagger in the corner of every time that we make a turning.

ALEX

Uh uh, and they also mentioned that blue is to do with utilities. So, whether there are power cables, a tunnel existing, things like that but it's more things like... it may not be unsound and fall on you if you go there but there's a good chance you might cut off power to a block and things like that. You find yourself in a yellow district. So, it's not particularly dangerous or anything like that but as the people slowly drop away and you get the notations til eventually realise you're at the edge of their explored dig. It is still vaulted ceilings. As you have been moving on there have been more items in the alcoves to the site and it just so happens that in this aspect of the alcoves you're mostly dealing with human remains. So, you happen to be in a part where there's been an enormous amount of indexed femurs. So, it's just leg bone, leg bone, leg, bone, leg bone with a little plaque and ID number but, nonetheless, you are in an area where almost everything is back in the walls. Occasionally there is an extremely damaged statue in a corner or so on, water

damage and things like that where what used to be a face is now just a blank mask and what used to be fingers have eroded away and into just lumps. They're still vaguely human looking but it's quite sinister. It is certainly... there's no natural light down here as well. I will go ahead and say that you kind of picked up something on the fly from any of the stores that they had.

BRYN

Well, I had... I mean...

LYDIA

We've got a survival kit.

BRYN

Hamid certainly will want to certainly at one point.

ALEX

You will have been able to pick up a torch like an actual electric torch. You have a handle on the side. If you wind it it will sort of charge it up and get it brighter. It is as bright as a normal flame lit torch, it's not just 35:27.

BEN

That sort of handle is kept to a tiny whip. To the 35:30 ??.

ALEX

Genuinely, what happens is the handle on the side aggravates the elemental within to generate more power. Mechanically speaking, it holds charge for ten rounds, it is a full round action for three rounds just to wind it up again. It's very inefficient.

BRYN

Wow. Yeah, yeah.

ALEX

But, it's basically all they've got unless you're using magical means and as far as you can tell further in, they were using magical means.

BRYN

Yeah.

ALEX

This is intended for a non-magical quick once through emergency measure. It's very bulky as well so you're not able to move at any kind of speed carrying it.

BRYN

I've got dark vision. So, I don't care.

ALEX

Of course, you're going to be fine. So, you are at the edge of the explored areas in a femur room. There are three tunnels leading off from where you are. The stone still looks worked although occasionally there's broken flagstone and a huge amount of dirt. You walked past the odd red taped caving area.

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

So, I think we're safe from being found now, probably not going to get discovered.

LYDIA

So, I'll we'll try and do find the ordinateurs because I suppose if they're breaking there we can follow them to Notre Dame.

BRYN

Yeah, see what they're up to.

BEN

To see if anyone's left anything behind if they've been down here using this is a way to get between the two.

BRYN

Yeah.

BEN

But it's all sort of away from the dig maybe but we can explore a bit more carefully there and see what's around and see if there's anything that seems like it might be connected to the dig.

LYDIA

Well, let's just head straight like... straightforward for as long as we can and then see.

BEN

Do you think that might be the best direction?

LYDIA

Well, we don't know where else do we?

BRYN

Well, I've got a compass.

LYDIA

What? Well, great. East.

BRYN

I'll get the compass out, look at the little pointer go and go east.

ALEX

Okay, the stone over time reaches worse and worse condition. What started as a little bit of water damage so most of the statues are alright, ooh that one one's a bit creepy, because universal. What used to be human remains in these alcoves has deteriorated to mush, you've no idea what it was. It's wet, very very wet. In fact, it's reaching the point where you're seeing small amounts of water seeping through holes in the walls. The flagstones are giving way to unworked stone occasionally. So, you'll see a tunnel leading off and it's leading into just rock. You keep going. The bits that you are still appears to be roughly speaking work stone and it leads deeper and deeper underground. Give me a perception check all of you.

BEN

9.

ALEX

9.

BRYN

17.

ALEX

17.

LYDIA

26.

ALEX

26. Sasha, you can spot Hamid might have the hint of this but not enough to be sure if it's not your imagination. The further east you get, the worse the smell becomes. A really vile odour. Multiple layers of awfulness. It's not just like, ooh that's smells a bit like poo, and you're just getting the occasional woff. You get the impression that it's a really powerful smell at a great distance, which is why the others may not have noticed it yet because you just happened to get a freak breeze and things like.

LYDIA

Guys, like are there any demony things that like omit stench as the... because, I mean... I swear that was like rotting flesh or something but there's no flesh down here so is there some kind of...

BRYN

If there are dead bodies, I mean...

LYDIA

But there...

BEN

They're old.

LYDIA

The bones, the bones have melted, Hamid, they're not going to smell or at least only like kind of...

BRYN

Well, we should..

LYDIA

Weird bone wet smell.

BRYN

We should be careful.

LYDIA

But, is there any kind of monster that... like a rotten thing?

BRYN

Not one that I can think of. Zombies, what do zombies smell like?

BEN

Probably zombies.

BRYN

(laughs)

BEN

You know... I don't know. I've not come into much contact with them.

LYDIA

Alright. Well let's just be quiet and keep the torch low, try not to... so people are looking and...

ALEX

Can all of you give me another perception check.

BEN

8.

BRYN

26.

LYDIA

24.

ALEX

Heading down. For a start all of you begin to notice the smell and, yeah, it is rank. It is basically as bad a smell as you can make. You also notice the quality of the stonework has deteriorated to the point where its starting to look unsafe. You'll walk past and even though you've been quite quiet there's a trickle of stone. In fact, Sasha noticed that a trickle of stone that starts small starts getting quite large and a little chunk of brickwork falls.

BRYN

We should go, go back this way, go back this way.

ALEX

39:56 ?? reflex save.

BEN

Okay.

LYDIA

Ooooh I'm going to get squished again.

BEN

4.

ALEX

4 for Zolf.

BRYN

13.

ALEX

13 for Hamid.

LYDIA

8.

ALEX

8. Okay. So, that trickles down...

LYDIA

Sasha, you're supposed to be the dodgy one. Every time.

BEN

You will only take half damage.

LYDIA

Yeah.

ALEX

True. So, that small trickle of stone finally releases what looks like some kind of keystone in the ceiling, something that's been there a while. It drops and then all of the arch around it begins to cave in. What's worse a large amount of water is coming with it. It's not a huge like sinking ship amount but clearly the water has eroded all of the cement between those bricks. And they drop. And they drop on all of you. Each of you roll me because I can't roll that many dice 2D6. Sasha, I will count this as something that you're able to take half damage on because of the nature of the fall.

LYDIA

Yay, reflex.

BRYN

9.

ALEX

Mm mm.

BEN

5.

LYDIA

7, you round up or down?

ALEX

In this system you almost always round down.

LYDIA

Okay.

ALEX

You all take that in damage. It is falling rock, dirt etc and you've all found yourselves buried. All of you are buried, with no exceptions. There is no light,

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there is no sound apart from the seeping clawing feel of water slowly impregnating all of the earth around you.

LYDIA

I never thought... I never thought I'm Miss Bertie.

ALEX

And what you hear is mm mm mm mm. End of episode.

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